

■ INSIDE

Street Talk	3
Crime Watch	4
Food & Drink	5
New Neighbor	7
Good Works	10
Home Sales	14



■ UPFRONT

Art Trail to Santa Barbara

Elusive Fillmore gallery takes the dream south

PAGE 2



■ LANDMARKS

When Garages Find a New Use

Some are reinvented, others are threatened

PAGE 12

THE NEW FILLMORE

SAN FRANCISCO ■ MARCH 2017



The District at Divisadero and Bush

Movin' on Up on Divis

'It's the perfect location,' say buyers of the new condos at The District



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIK ANDERSON

DANICA MURPHY was one of the early adopters who bought a condo at The District at Divisadero and Bush when she moved out from New York. She loves her new home so much that her father also bought one of the units as an investment. **STORY | PAGE 9**

BY CHRIS BARNETT

HIGH SCHOOL history teacher Elizabeth Siarny and her fiancé had narrow and rigid criteria when househunting in San Francisco. Siarny works in Marin County and her fiancé works for a Silicon Valley technology company. The transplanted Chicagoans did not want the hassle and expense of owning a car in the city, so their new home would have to be close to their shuttle bus stops.

In January 2016, the couple saw the floor plan for a one-bedroom, one-and-a-half bath, two-level 800-square-foot townhome at The District, the 81-unit, six-level condominium building on the corner of Bush and Divisadero that was just a hole in the ground at the time.

They pounced on it. As the first

to buy in to The District, they waited patiently for a year before they could move in.

"It's the perfect location for us — two blocks from my shuttle stop, six blocks from his," says Siarny. "It has a gym, a private patio, a rooftop sky deck, a Pilates and yoga studio around the corner, tons of restaurants nearby and an urgent care center across the street — although I am really sad about the King of Falafel leaving." The care center replaced the falafel shop that lost its lease nearly two years ago.

The couple was impressed with the creative use of space at The District. Their floor plan has a room on the second level outside their bedroom that could double as a home office or a mini-den. "It really feels like a home," Siarny says.

TO PAGE 8 ►

London Market now a wine and spirits shop

The neighborhood lost another of its corner groceries last year when the London Market at Divisadero and Sacramento closed. This month it will be reborn as the sleekly modern **CORBEAUX'S LONDON MARKET**, a wine and whiskey shop with a gourmet deli in the back offering cheese, charcuterie and caviar.

It's the brainchild of Kyle Nadeau — who worked at D&M Liquors on Fillmore Street for nearly a decade — and his partner Evan Krow, both of whom live nearby.

The grand opening is later this month, but it's "softly open" now. "We've had a lot of desire from people in the neighborhood wanting to get in here," says Nadeau.

■
ON THE BLOCK: More than two years after it closed, the expansive restaurant and showroom that housed Yoshi's — and the rest of the **FILLMORE HERITAGE CENTER** at 1300-1330 Fillmore — has been put up for sale. Proposals are due by April 3.

After investing \$18 million in the center as a key part of its effort to revitalize the Fillmore Jazz District, the city took over the complex in 2015. Since then city officials have been trying to figure out what to do with the building. The request for proposals sets a minimum bid of \$6.5 million. For more details, see the legal notice on page 14.

■
STILL MORE BEAUTY: The fixtures and furnishings had barely been removed from the Ella Moss boutique at 1913 Fillmore when a new body products shop announced it was joining Fillmore's Beauty Row. **SAJE**, a Canadian company that promises to have 50 stores by 2018, is remodeling the space now.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS



Fire at the Elite

It was a sunny Friday morning on February 24, and it looked as if the historic neon sign fronting the Elite Cafe would at last be fully lit. "We finally found the part to fix the sign to light both sides," says owner Andy Chun, "and the sign guys somehow caught the thing on fire when they were installing it." Chun says the extent of the damage and how long repairs will take are both unknown at this point.

Hospital May Sell Its Library

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL sandstone building at Sacramento and Webster that has housed the medical library for the nearby hospital since 1912 is headed for a new life in its second century.

Its collections have been dispersed and the library's small staff is relocating by the end of March to the nearby Gerbode Research Building at Webster and Clay.

A hospital spokesman said the library has not been listed for sale. But library director Anne Shew confirmed the building was being vacated and said: "It will be put on the market soon — in the next couple of months."



The Health Sciences Library, built in 1912.

The library lost much of its patronage in 2014 when the University of the Pacific's dental school left its longtime home across the street. The dental school had shared the library with the hospital.

Among those said to be interested in buying the landmark building: Trumark Urban, developer of The Pacific condominium complex at 2121 Webster, which replaced the dental school.



Vintage Kim Frohsin | Abstracting the Figure

MARCH 2017

WE'RE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE: We are back on Fillmore Street for a springtime pop-up exhibition featuring favorite San Francisco artist Kim Frohsin. Plus work by Sandy Ostrau, Ken Auster and other Bay Area figurative painters.

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Blind researcher and community leader seeks part-time administrative assistant.

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CRIME WATCH

Possession of Narcotics for Sale Divisadero and Geary

January 17, 12:25 a.m.

Two patrol officers passed a parked car and noted that two individuals inside quickly ducked down. The officers stopped and approached the vehicle. The car gave off a strong odor of narcotics.

After asking for the occupants' IDs and running criminal history checks, the officers discovered two outstanding felony warrants for one of them, plus a prior arrest record involving narcotics sales.

As the suspect was being taken into custody, the officers found a large amount of cash in his pockets. They also recovered a fist-sized ball of black tar heroin inside the car, along with drug paraphernalia. The suspects were booked at county jail.

Robbery and Assault Divisadero and Hayes

January 18, 1:23 a.m.

A woman was waiting for a car she had hailed with her ride-sharing app when a vehicle containing three women in their 20s pulled up to the curb. Believing it was the car she had requested, she got inside. Two of the occupants immediately pushed the woman out of the car, then threw her to the sidewalk and kicked and stepped on her. They then took her phone, purse and credit cards. It was unclear whether the suspects were impersonating a ride share service or had simply taken advantage of an opportunity that presented itself. Because the suspect entered the car willingly, the case is being investigated as a robbery with force rather than a kidnapping.

Hot Prowl Burglary Presidio and Balboa

January 20, 8:45 a.m.

A man was home with his wife and children when he heard a loud noise coming from downstairs. He went to investigate and saw his laptop was missing, along with other items.

Believing the burglar had just left the house, he ran outside and saw a man he did not recognize leaving his neighbor's yard. The intruder was wearing a backpack taken from the home. The resident chased him and confronted him. During the altercation, the resident sprayed the suspect with pepper spray. The intruder dropped the backpack and fled. Officers responded to the scene, but were unable to locate him. When the resident returned home, he realized that additional items were missing.

The suspect is described as a white male between 28 and 30 years old. He is about 5 ft. 9 in. tall, weighs approximately 160 lbs. and has brown hair and tattoos on his neck. The incident is still under investigation.

Home Invasion Laguna and McAllister

January 20, 11 a.m.

A woman heard a knock at the door of her apartment. When she opened it, a man and a woman forced their way inside. One of them punched the woman in the face.

One suspect then pinned her to the wall with her cane while threatening her with a knife. The second intruder searched the home for items to steal. Afterward, both suspects fled the apartment complex. The woman was transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. No arrest has been made. The matter is being investigated.

Delivery Vehicle Carjacking Octavia and Green

January 25, 4 p.m.

A man was returning to his delivery vehicle when another man approached him, brandished a handgun and demanded the deliveryman's keys. Fearing for his life,

he complied, and the carjacker took off. An accomplice followed behind the delivery vehicle in a car.

The deliveryman tracked his vehicle and provided its location to the police. Officers located it, along with three suspects. One man was arrested; the other two fled on foot.

Burglary, Unlawful Entry Washington and Cherry

January 26, 9:50 a.m.

Officers received a call about a hot prowl burglary. When they arrived at the scene, the homeowner said the intruder was still inside the house. Officers entered the residence and confronted the man. He claimed that a friend had given him a key to the house and he had permission to be there, saying it was simply a misunderstanding.

The man was carrying packages addressed to a hospital, which appeared to contain medical supplies. He claimed he had found the packages and was going to return them.

The suspect also had several car keys and vehicle maintenance products, which appeared to belong to a local automotive company. Again he claimed he had found them. However, a phone call to the automotive company revealed their store had recently been burglarized. Police viewed the store's surveillance footage and saw that the suspect was responsible for the burglary. The man was booked at county jail.

Cell Phone Robbery With Force Van Ness and California

January 29, 9:30 a.m.

A man ran up behind a woman and snatched her cell phone out of her hand, causing her to fall. The suspect then jumped into a nearby car driven by an accomplice and sped off. The matter is still under investigation.

Theft, Shoplifting Sacramento and Locust

February 5, 3:15 p.m.

A witness inside a store saw a man run out the door with a bag of merchandise later determined to be worth \$1,200. The witness ran after the suspect, caught him and held him down until the police arrived.

Responding officers took the shoplifter into custody without incident. All of the merchandise he took was returned to the store. The suspect was charged with grand theft and booked at county jail.

Outstanding Warrant Sacramento and Presidio

February 6, 10:40 p.m.

Officers received a call about a man attempting to break into a business. After they detained the man, they investigated the scene of the crime, but could not find any exterior damage to the door of the business or signs of forced entry.

After they identified the suspect, they discovered three outstanding warrants for his arrest, one for vandalism and two for assault. He was booked at county jail.

Robbery Fulton and Masonic

February 18, 10:23 a.m.

A woman was sitting on her steps, smoking, when a man came by and asked her for a cigarette. When she said she did not have one, he walked away. Seconds later, he returned, this time demanding the woman's phone and all her cigarettes. He then snatched the woman's phone out of her hand. She jumped up, struggled for the phone and recovered it. The man then grabbed her and threw her to the ground. She fled to a nearby cafe to call the police and the suspect left the scene. The matter is still under investigation.

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‘It Fits In With the New Neighborhood’

A Mexican mainstay on Divisadero gets a new look and a hip new name: EBX

By CHRIS BARNETT

FOR 26 YEARS, El Burrito Express at 1812 Divisadero could have passed as a dark, dingy Mexican takeout joint on a side street in Chihuahua. Worn Pancho Villa and bullfighter posters plastered the walls. Seating was on a jumble of often broken chairs clustered around a few beat-up tables. Customers grabbed a soda or cerveza from the fridge, ordered, paid, waited and waited — and then usually vamoosed with their tinfoil-wrapped meal in a paper bag.

But the food was always fresh and good and the prices were fair. It mattered little that some taco trucks seemed to offer more in the way of ambience.

That has changed. In a mere 30 days, Felipe Havlicek, co-owner with his mom Mila, turned the place into a sunny and stylish sit-down and let us serve you south-of-the-border taqueria where you want to stay and enjoy your meal. There’s a hip new name, too — EBX — and a mantra — “Paz, Amor y Burritos” (Peace, Love and Burritos) — both emblazoned on the walls in neon. And there are plenty of new customers.

The transformation is so dramatic that local passersby are poking their heads in for the first time. “It never caught our attention before now,” says Jacquie Dara, eyeing the menu.

“I wouldn’t have walked in here before — it looked like a hole in the wall,” says Ryan Nauar, chowing down on the signature Bronco burrito. “But it’s a hidden gem, and right across from my friend’s new condo. It fits in with the new neighborhood.”

The owners acknowledge the change.

“PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS loved our food, but they wouldn’t stay and hang out because it was dark and uninviting,” admits Havlicek. “We didn’t bring food to the table, we had quirky things on the wall — a 250-pound tuna, for example. Chairs were broken. People were pretty ruthless, too, in their verbal abuse.”

The facelift was a year in the making, without warning of a shutdown. One day the windows were papered over and regulars thought El Burrito was yet another eatery in the neighborhood to fall victim to a husky rent hike by a greedy landlord. Rent, though, is not a problem here. “My family had the foresight to buy the building



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DICKIE SPRITZER



In a mere 30 days, the owners turned the 26-year-old El Burrito Express into a sunny and stylish sit-down restaurant they’ve renamed EBX.

in the 1990s for \$600,000,” says Havlicek.

Indeed, Mila, Felipe and his sister Celia are part of a Bay Area Mexican food empire. The grandparents, who emigrated from Jalisco in 1950, opened the first of 11 Celia’s restaurants at 45th and Judah.

The newly minted EBX is warm and bright now that the awning blocking the sunshine has been torn down and the ceiling high windows exposed. Walls are covered half way up with reclaimed redwood planks rescued from a Santa Rosa bar. New

tables are fashioned out of walnut and ringed with surprisingly comfortable metal chairs. A thick slab of maple, polished, varnished and affixed to iron legs, is a standup table in the middle of the small space.

TO PAGE 6 ►

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El Burrito Express Is Now EBX

► FROM PAGE 5

The earth tones of the wood are offset by walls painted a soft cream. The bandido posters and the trophy tuna are gone. A second big screen TV has been added. Both are tuned to Spanish stations, but the volume doesn't drown out conversation.

Clever touches are sprinkled around. Punched tin Mexican starlight fixtures hang overhead in the two window alcoves. Corona beer bottles filled with gold-sprayed pinto beans and holding a red carnation are the centerpiece on every table. "There is a lot of gold in Mexico and beans have supported our family business for a long, long time," says Havlicek.

Also new: a floor manager named Karla Moraza who doubles as a greeter and server delivering meals to customers with a smile. Takeout orders still get the brown paper bag and a free handful of chips made in-house every hour.

THE MODERN RUSTIC LOOK is so well executed it gives EBX a contemporary feel. "I like to make personal spaces look natural, simple, clean and timeless," says Havlicek, who designed and specified all the materials and furnishings. "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."

The transformation didn't include higher prices, he says. "Nothing worse than when a restaurant closes, remodels and jacks up the prices," says Havlicek. "But we plan on expanding the menu with traditional dishes like pozole, a Mexican stew, moles, ceviches and a Mexican chopped salad."

In addition to beer and sodas, EBX has added wine margaritas, a fruit-filled sangria, champelo (agave, grapefruit juice and Champagne) and something he calls a

"dirty chata" — horchata, a rice drink, with a shot of espresso. New too is a Michelada, similar to a Mexican Bloody Mary. It's made with beer and tomato and lime juice and is priced at \$5.

By doing most of the work himself, Havlicek says the reinvented EBX cost far less than he would have paid architects, interior designers, a contractor and a construction crew.

And his timing was spot on. EBX still attracts the neighborhood crowd and all the hospital and medical building workers. But he is now getting new condo owners from The District across the street and a daily rush of Silicon Valley techies disgorging from the sleek silver shuttles that stop outside the front door.

Additionally, food couriers and delivery outfits such as Eat 24 and Door Dash will home deliver EBX call-ins. "I'm also working on ways for nearby doctors and professionals to call in orders and pick them up," says Havlicek. "We're starting Taco Tuesdays, Burrito Fridays and 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. happy hours daily in March."

He can afford to discount, he says, because new customers are discovering EBX and checks are fatter now that they're sitting down to eat instead of grabbing and going. A recent diner, Rory Moore, confirms it. "I almost always ordered takeout because this place was dark and not very inviting," Moore says. Adds his lunch partner, Halley Burns, who just came off a 10-day juice cleanse and was having the new chopped salad: "I love this place."

But is a diet of Mexican food good for the body? Havlicek thinks so. "My mom is 61," he says. "And she's run three marathons."



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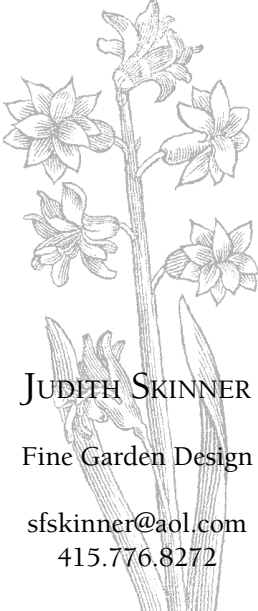
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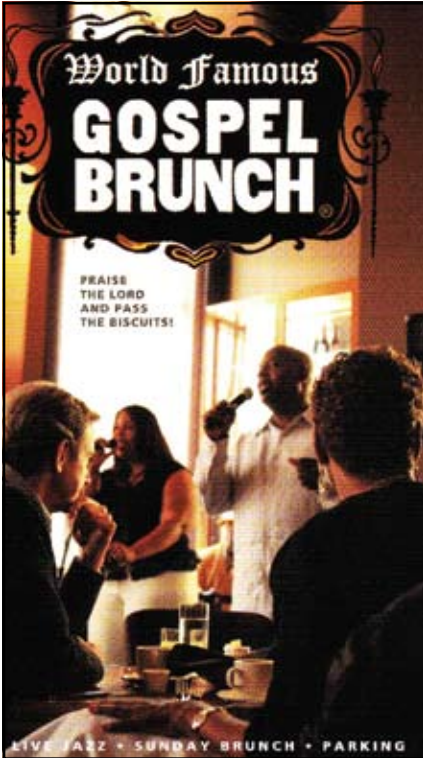
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LATE LAST YEAR, the Wild Hare at the corner of California and Divisadero reopened with a stripped-down and simplified interior that did away with its Alice in Wonderland decor. And it added Matt Schweitzer, a newly recruited Seattle restaurant owner, to manage the popular neighborhood spot and help shake up the pub fare on the menu.

Then a couple of weeks ago locals began noticing additional changes such as “Organic,” “Salads,” “Wraps” and “Coffee” were stenciled onto the bar’s back side windows facing Divisadero Street.

The lettering heralds the menu of a new takeout spot that is the brainchild of William Kasel and Megan Kistler. They couldn’t have picked a more promising location for a grab and go eatery: It opens onto the bus stop for the 24-Divisadero bus and the shuttle buses ferrying tech workers to and from Silicon Valley.

Kasel and Kistler opened their initial location last Thanksgiving at 100 Green Street near Levi’s Plaza. At 51 square feet — “the size of a box,” Kasel notes — the site inspired the name for their company: Greenbox. The duo also has deals in the works for two more Greenbox locations: one in SOMA, the other in Dogpatch.

While still a work in progress, the small local spot makes new use of the back room at Wild Hare. It is now open limited hours aimed to catch the commuter crowd: 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on weekends.

“We looked at what we could do to address the market that has very little time, but is used to very high quality food,” Kasel says.



Greenbox is open mornings until 1 p.m. to serve commuters at the bus stop out front.

GRAB & GO

Wild Hare sprouts a little brother: Greenbox

And you don’t have to wait. “As a customer, you should be able to come in and get what you need in 2 1/2 minutes,” he says.

The offerings at Greenbox include smoothies and wraps and a variety of salads with optional toppings of chicken, steak, salmon or tuna as well as hummus and a vegetable plate.

Kasel says there’s a certain sameness to most prepackaged salads: “They’re made with the lowest common denominator of ingredients — usually just crappy romaine with some old parmesan thrown on top.

And they’re made *way* in advance,” he says. “But we think food is really beautiful — and we’re lucky to live in a place with such easy access to fresh offerings. We use only organic produce and care very much about its quality, flavor — and color.”

Greenbox also offers a number of libations to go with the food: Happy Moose Juice, cold-pressed by hydraulic juicers in the city’s Mission District, along with Portland-based Stumptown cold-brewed coffee that uses Latin American blends and Intelligentsia hot brew, with beans roasted daily across town on Potrero Hill.

“This neighborhood cares very much about flavor, Kasel notes. “So we paid attention to that detail and tried all the coffee we could. We chose these two for their flavor and quality.” Another selling point: Both coffee companies adhere to direct trade policies, meaning they buy straight from the growers and pay them equitably.

Kasel says a pleasant surprise at the new location is the sense of camaraderie among merchants on the rapidly changing street. He has befriended the owner of the London Market & Deli, the newly remodeled store coming to the corner of Divisadero and Sacramento. And Tim Hayman, owner of Scopo Divino across the street, uses its smoker to prepare his meats.

“From a business owner’s perspective, everyone is working collectively to benefit the area as a whole, to make it more lively and inviting,” Kasel says.

“And of course, we’re very much connected with Wild Hare,” he says, noting they share some staff and ownership, as well as an appreciation for good food. “It has completely changed its food, pulling in Cordon Bleu chefs. There’s a real emphasis on freshness: Even the ketchup is house-made.”

Kasel says the two businesses are working on ways to “cross-utilize” in the future. Ideas in the works: Happy Moose Juice cocktails, offering a fusion of juice and alcohol, as well as cold-brewed cocktails featuring a blend of spirits and Stumptown coffee. Drinkers and diners should also keep attuned to “spillover” from the Greenbox menu into Wild Hare, infusing the pub fare with additional healthy offerings.

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'It's the Perfect Location'

► FROM PAGE ONE

KB Home, a Los Angeles-based megabuilder that bought The District's lot for \$38 million in 2012, is no stranger to Northern California. The company is the sixth biggest homebuilder in the U.S. based on revenues. It trades on the New York Stock Exchange and currently has 25 single family and condo communities selling in the San Francisco Bay Area.

KB Home's historical niche is affordable housing in the suburbs, mainly for first-time home buyers. Last year was strong for the company. Home sales were up 23 percent for the fiscal year that ended last November, with the average home sales price at \$387,400, according to its last quarterly report.

THE DISTRICT WAS NOT KB Home's first foray into the fiercely competitive newly built condo market in San Francisco. In January 2015, KB debuted Seventy2 Townsend — its "signature" condominium line — in a 74 unit building in the hip South Beach/Soma neighborhood. Billed as "luxury condominiums," they started at a million bucks for a one-bedroom, 780-square-footer and topped out at \$3.49 million for a three-bedroom, 1,740-square-foot penthouse.

But despite the sleek design and way South of Market location near the ballpark — and Google and Genentech offices — sales have been slow. The San Francisco-based Mark Company, a closely watched monthly index that tracks condominium prices and sales, noted last month that Seventy2 Townsend, in two years, has closed only 43 sales, with three more in contract and 21 units still available. The Mark report claims the project is selling about two homes a month. Brokers say the builder recently brought in Cline Real Estate as an outside residential sales organization to add muscle to the team.

KB Home has taken a different marketing and pricing strategy with The District. Three years ago, when the .75 acre block was being graded, condo watchers were convinced that, even in Lower Pacific Heights, prices for the one-bedroom floor plan would start at \$1 million. The speculation might have been driven by the fact that the former dental school at Sacramento and Webster was being gutted and transformed

into The Pacific, with 76 luxurious condos, elegant finishes and resort-like amenities such as a yoga garden, a round-the-clock lobby attendant and a full-service concierge during the day. The tight-lipped developer wouldn't reveal prices, which only heightened interest. The Pacific's condominiums are currently selling for \$1.475 million for a one-bedroom unit, up to \$13.8 million for a penthouse.

SO, RATHER THAN follow in the footsteps of its own Seventy2 Townsend or The Pacific nearby, KB Home positioned The District as the value play condominium community, priced its one-bedroom residences under seven figures and pumped up the amenities. For example, there's a lobby with an attendant from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the week. But KB Home officials say it could be staffed longer if owners request it and are willing to pay for it via their homeowners association assessment. All kitchens have German-made Bosch ovens, dishwashers and stacked washer-dryers, as well as 27-inch Thermador refrigerator-freezers.

"Young people want to live here. Empty nesters want to live here. So far, you have a lot of both."

— SAN FRANCISCO BROKER on buyers at The District

The District offers other nice touches. A fitness center is equipped with treadmills, ellipticals, a bicycle, circuit trainer and free weights, among other exercise gear. A rooftop sky deck for relaxing or entertaining has a variety of dining and lounging seating and a gas grill. An owner's community room on the ground floor has a big screen TV, free WiFi, comfortable seating, a large dining table and a small kitchen. A locked storage room is available for bicycle owners and a grooming station is included for pets.

KB Home's regional president for Northern California, Chris Apostolopoulos, contends that a major selling feature is location. "The community is surrounded by some of the best restaurants in the city," he says. But even more appealing may be the proximity to all the bars and mom and pop shops near Divisadero that have virtually disappeared from Fillmore Street in recent years. A cool vibe, including a Sunday farmers market, has emerged farther south in Nopa and on newly trendy lower Divisadero.

The District is also a few blocks away from a number of grocery stores, drug stores, banks and bus stops and medical facilities.



The District's amenities include a rooftop party deck (above), a community room on the ground floor (below) and modern well-equipped kitchens (bottom) in all units.




PHOTOGRAPHS FROM KB HOMES

Its ground floor retail space, rumored to be in line for another drug store or bank, has been leased to UCSF and now houses its physical therapy lab.

With all of its obvious and easy to docu-


ment conveniences, KB Home initially pitched The District as a "luxury" condominium building. That's overreaching, say a number of San Francisco real estate brokers — all of whom refused to allow their



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names to be used — including several who sold condominiums in The District to their clients.

“This is not a luxury location, being right next to a hospital and medical buildings. It’s a convenient location,” says one broker. “The finishes are not what you would find in a true luxury development like The Pacific — but then you’re not paying \$3 million at the low end.”

The District’s pricing is not in the stratosphere. The smallest condos, at 580 square feet, sold out immediately, though the price has not been disclosed. A larger one-bedroom, one-bath unit, spanning 685 square feet, is priced at \$890,000. A 980-square-foot one bedroom plus a study and one-and-a-half baths is priced at \$999,000. A 974-square-foot two-bedroom, two-bath condo starts at \$1.179 million and goes up to \$1.369 million for a unit with a bonus room and 1,097 square feet. The biggest two-bedroom, two-bath condos are 1,600 square feet, include a den and are selling for up to \$2.095 million. The recently released three-bedroom, two-bath penthouses on the sixth floor top out at 1,600 square feet and \$2.420 million. The bigger penthouses come with two tandem parking spaces.

EXACTLY HOW MANY condos at The District have been sold and how many are still available is a mystery. Apostolopoulos, KB Home’s top executive in Northern California, says about 75 percent of the 81 homes are sold. But the Mark Company’s February sales report for The District puts it at 38 units closed, nine in contract and 34 still available. Brokers familiar with the building say Mark’s numbers are more accurate.

There’s also a disparity in the amounts levied by the homeowners association. Apostolopoulos described the fee as “north of \$500 a month.” Brokers who have toured The District and sold its condos say the HOA is closer to \$800 a month. Precise amounts are tied to the size of the unit.

After pushback from some in the brokerage community, KB Home has recently shied away from describing The District as luxury housing. The emphasis today is on convenience, value, upmarket appliances, light, outside spaciousness and private patios. A major amenity, say brokers, is a deeded parking space for every residence and two for some penthouses.

At the moment, a number of brokers agree that condominium sales are slowing down across the city. “There’s an increase in the number of times a buyer will come to look at a property,” says one prominent real estate saleswoman.

But that doesn’t mean potential buyers can wheel and deal on price. “Getting a condo developer to budge off the asking



ERIK ANDERSON

“That was it,” Danica Murphy says of seeing the condos at The District. “Brand new. I loved it.”

‘I’ll Go For It’ — The City and The District

DANICA MURPHY, 32, was living the good life in New York City: Owned a co-op apartment in tony Gramercy Park. Loved her job at getAbstract, a company that distills business books to five pages. Inhaled the city’s live theater, quirky restaurants and local hang-outs. One day her boss asked her to open a San Francisco office. “Great opportunity,” she thought. “I’ll go for it.”

Most people who transplant themselves to a new city tiptoe in and rent an apartment while they try out different neighborhoods. Not Murphy. “I was never looking to rent,” she says. “I had a good feeling about this move, about San Francisco — and decided to buy a place straightaway.” Before she arrived, Murphy connected with Debra Christoffers, a real estate broker with Zephyr Real Estate, who was referred by a friend.

“I gave her my parameters: good location, quiet, within walking distance of good restaurants and good coffee — and it had to be safe,” says Murphy. “Deb took me to old traditional places and new construction all over the city. Then she showed me The District. That was it. Brand new. I loved it.”

Murphy bought a two-bedroom, two-bath 1,083-square-foot condominium facing the courtyard. She turned the second bedroom into an office, saving herself a morning and afternoon commute. “It’s very quiet here for working and concentrating.

In New York, I lived in the heart of the city and always heard honking, sirens and other street distractions,” she says. “Still, what immediately caught my eye was the gorgeous kitchen. I’m a cook.”

Murphy quickly settled into to the neighborhood. She frequently crosses Divis for coffee at Starbuck’s. She drops into the San Francisco Athletic Club sports bar next door for a beer whenever her alma mater, the University of Virginia, is on the big screen. She runs in Golden Gate Park and the Presidio, nibbles the delicacies at b. patisserie and strolls the boutiques and cosmetics shops on

“Good location, quiet, near good restaurants and good coffee — and safe.”

— DANICA MURPHY
on what she wanted in a new home

Fillmore Street.

Murphy’s happiness with her new home must be contagious. Her dad in Virginia has recently bought a condo in The District as an investment — sight unseen.

— CHRIS BARNETT

price is almost impossible,” says a seasoned broker who specializes in San Francisco’s north side. “That’s because they are rolling out new product and want to show it has great demand and desirability. But you can negotiate other goodies if you pay full price — such as an upgrade in finishes, assistance with closing costs or maybe a storage unit,” he adds. “That way the developer still gets the asking price and the buyer gets added value. But because the market is starting to soften overall, my experience is there is room to negotiate.”

However, according to recent Multiple

Listing Service reports on sales, The District has sold properties below asking price. In late January, a one-bedroom, one-bath, 665-square-foot home sold for \$775,000; the asking price was \$799,000. A two-bedroom, two-bath, 974-square-foot residence sold for \$1.215 million, below the \$1.269 million asking price. A larger 1,233-square-foot two-bedroom, two-bath home sold for \$1.385 million, down from the \$1.407 million asking price. Other MLS listings showed condos in The District selling at asking and one selling at \$10,000 over asking.

Still, The District has no real competition in this part of the neighborhood when it comes to buying and moving into a freshly minted, strategically located home. “For the person who wants to be in that interesting and fun neighborhood that’s super hot, flat and walkable — I can tell you my clients are thrilled with it,” a veteran broker says.

He adds that buyers in The District have been a diverse mix: “There are ethnic, age and job differences. Young people want to live here. Empty nesters want to live here. So far, you have a lot of both.”



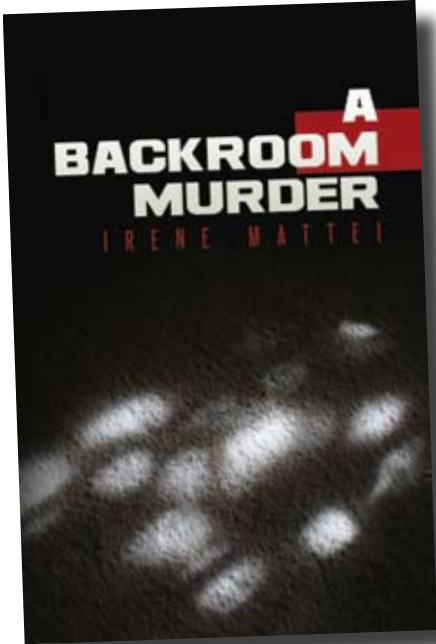
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An Honest Job

With a little help, Luis Garcia is turning his life around

By Francine Brevetti

WHEN LUIS GARCIA was 13, he thought robbing people was normal. Now, at 22, after multiple incarcerations, he sees working an honest job for a decent living as normal. He turned his head around with the help of the Success Center, a nonprofit at 1449 Webster Street providing vocational and education services for area youth.

Garcia grew up in the Mission District with his widowed mother and three siblings. While he wasn't in a gang, he and his contemporaries repeatedly accosted people on the street. He says part of the reason he robbed others was that he needed the money. "And for thrills — little dumb stuff," he says. "My friends were doing the same thing. I grew up thinking it was normal."

Garcia was in detention on and off at the Juvenile Justice Center. He estimates he was at liberty only about three months during his adolescence. At one point, he was sent to a group home in Pennsylvania where he trained and was certified in welding. He returned to California when he was 18.

He meant to find honest employment, but had no idea how long it would take to make that happen. And he needed money. "So I did some of the same stuff again," he says.

This time juvenile detention was not in the cards. Since he had been a repeat offender and was 18, he was treated as an adult and sent to jail for nearly four years. He had one strike against him.

"This time it wasn't so easy. They didn't treat you so



"I'm super excited. I wanted to be an ironworker."

— LUIS GARCIA, on his new job with Mission City Rebar

nice," he says. For 23½ hours a day, there was nothing to do but reflect and read. "They say you're in a cell, but your mind is free," Garcia says. He took hope from that snippet of wisdom.

Luckily, he had more than that to keep him going. He had a sweetheart.

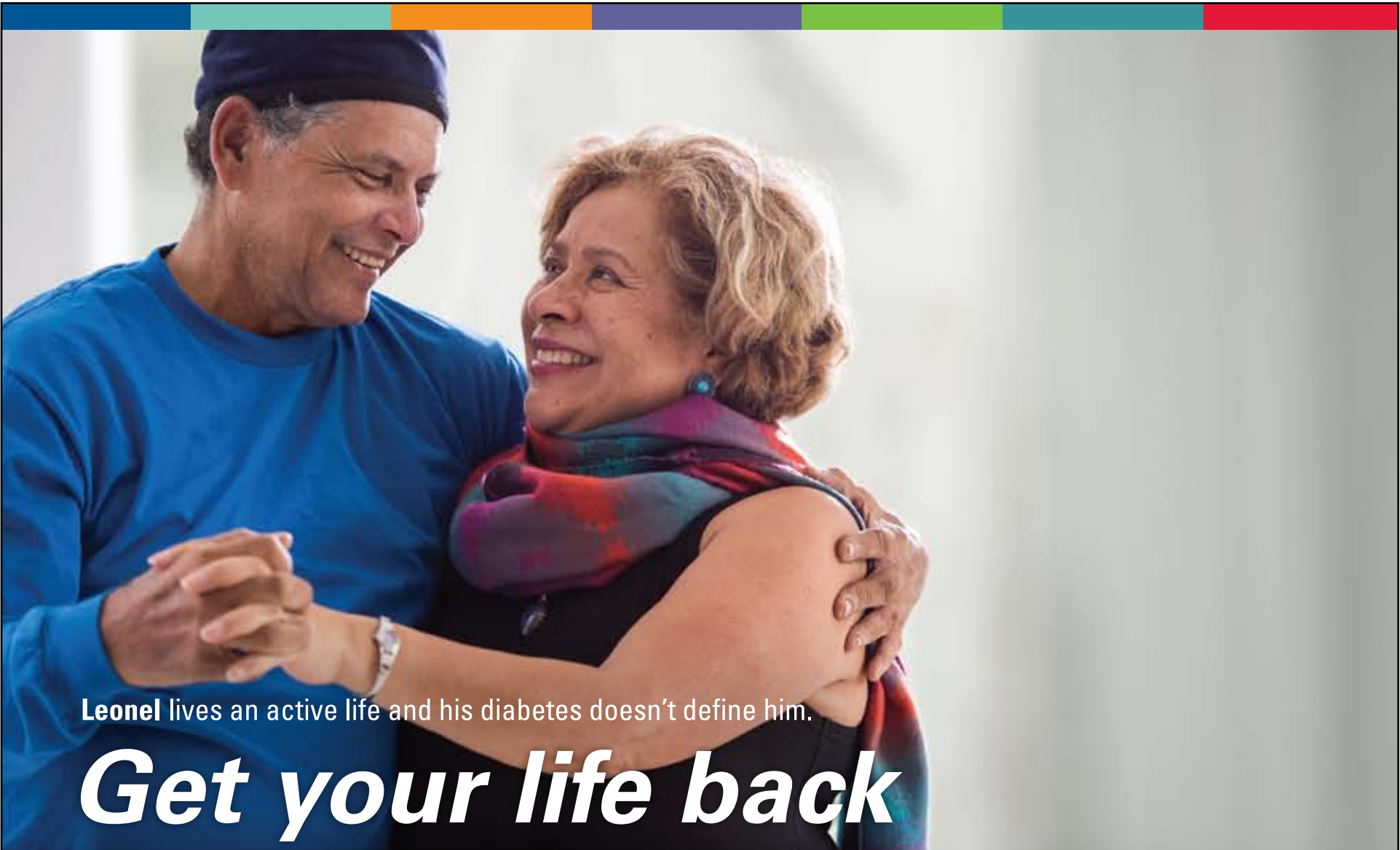
While his mother was distressed about his life choices and direction, Magrisel, whom he had known since elementary school, had not given up on him. She wrote him letters and visited once a week. He called her frequently from behind bars. A single mom with a son, Magrisel pressed him to raise his standards and turn his life around.

They married while he was in prison. "My main inspi-

ration was my wife," he says. "I wanted to be a better role model for her son — our son. When I grew up, I didn't have a father. He passed away when I was 7. I wish I'd had someone to guide me along the way."

When Garcia got out of jail last fall, he had successfully reimagined himself. He snagged a minimum wage job in food service with Boudin Bakery. After just a month, he found a better job with Merrell, a purveyor of sport and hiking shoes. He was feeling pretty good about himself. But then Merrell closed and he lost the job.

A friend then introduced him to Western Addition Neighborhood Access Point, one of several programs across the city supported by the Success Center and San



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Francisco's Office of Economic and Workplace Development. It includes a career center offering job training and placement services.

He hoped the Success Center would help him get a position as a security guard. But since he was already certified as a welder, center manager Patricia Tu thought differently.

"We sat down and talked about his goals," she says. "Since he was already working, it made sense to find him a better job and a career path."

And since he was already competent in welding, construction seemed to be a good choice.

Tu notes that construction employers rarely find criminal records as an obstacle to hiring. "All you need is a driver's license and a clean drug record," she says. Garcia qualified on both counts.

The Success Center helped him prepare a resume and learn to present himself as employable. He says that was the most valuable part of his experience there.

Then Garcia, after all those years of batting zero, finally found himself in the right place at the right time. One of the weeklong workshops he attended included lectures on math and financial practices, including credit scores. Another speaker, herself an ironworker, addressed the class. Garcia listened attentively.

"Toward the end of her talk, she asked who wanted to be in the union and I raised my hand. I told her I wanted to be an ironworker," Garcia says. "She made one call that Friday and by Monday I was at the facility in Benicia and by Tuesday I was working."

Today Garcia is grateful to the Success Center. He is now working as an apprentice for Mission City Rebar, based in Livermore. His supervisor Greg Yost says Garcia has lots of energy. "We look forward to seeing him get up to the next level quickly," says Yost.

"I'm super excited," Garcia says. He envisions a future when he can buy a house, have more children and in a few years become a journeyman, all thanks to the intervention and support of the Success Center.

Even better, after seven years he can appeal to have his record expunged. And then he hopes to go on to firefighter's school.

"My mother is very happy and proud of me," he says with a smile.



"We find jobs for people who have never worked," says Success Center director Liz Jackson-Simpson.

'We Could Send Them to Harvard for That'

WHEN LUIS GARCIA entered the doors of the Western Addition Neighborhood Access Point last December, he gained entree into a wide array of support systems and services. The program is among those Liz Jackson-Simpson leads under the umbrella called the Success Center San Francisco, which focuses on educating and employing marginalized youth. The center was founded 33 years ago by a group of local superior court judges.

"In San Francisco, over 5,000 young people are habitual chronic truants. Over 60 percent of black and brown youth are failing at the ninth grade level," says Jackson-Simpson. "It costs over \$125,000 a year to house a young person in detention. We could send them to Harvard for that amount of money."

She stresses that San Francisco needs to invest those dollars more efficiently "with education and job training to ready our young people to go into the job force."

At a cost of less than \$8,000 a year per person, the Success Center provides each needy youth with GED instruction, job training, placement services and intensive case management — as well as help paying for test fees, union dues and wardrobe — plus the use of a computer and fax machine to help with job searches.

Jackson-Simpson says 80 percent of the group's clients graduate. "We find jobs for people who have never worked at the rate of \$15 to \$20 an hour," she says. Last year the Western Addition Neighborhood Access Point placed almost 300 young people in jobs.

TacoBar, at Fillmore and California, is among the neighborhood businesses that have employed clients of the Success Center. And 1300 on Fillmore restaurant has hosted "bootcamps" offering hands-on training in food service.

— FRANCINE BREVETTI

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Neighborhood Garages Sometimes Find a New Use

Some are reinvented, others are threatened

By BRIDGET MALEY

AS THE AUTOMOBILE increased in popularity and affordability in the 1920s, neighborhood parking garages and repair shops became the norm in San Francisco.

Because private homes were commonly constructed without garages, a new type of building evolved to serve residents with parking needs. Neighborhood garages were often one- or two-story concrete structures with industrial interiors. However, given their placement within the city's established residential enclaves or along commercial corridors, they were often designed to fit into an existing architectural vocabulary. Many of these once indispensable buildings are still found across the city and in our neighborhood.

These structures represent a "remarkable collection of commercial, utilitarian buildings," says Mark Kessler, author of *Early*

Public Garages of San Francisco: An Architectural and Cultural Study, 1906-1929. "With facades ornamented in an eclectic mix of Gothic, Mission and Renaissance revival styles and exposed structure on the inside, they bring an unlikely combination of grace and grit to San Francisco's streets," he says.



The ex-garage at 3060 Fillmore until recently housed Real Foods.

Some of the older garages retain their auto-related uses, including 2405 Bush at Pierce, which was built as a Model T showroom and garage and is still used as an auto body shop. Others still in use include 1745 Divisadero, between Bush and Sutter, and 2340 Lombard, between Pierce and Scott.



The Michelin-starred restaurant Spruce is housed in a former garage at 3640 Sacramento.

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Eight residential units were built at 421 Arguello (left). The garage at 1776 Green (right) is for sale as a “development opportunity.”



In the garage at 1550 Union, near Van Ness, purportedly a large amount of contraband liquor was stored during Prohibition.

A number of local garages were constructed by Joseph Pasqualetti, who owned the American Concrete Co. One of Pasqualetti’s more interesting garages is still used for auto repairs at 1565 Bush Street, and has recently been repainted. It has fared better than some of its neighbors along Pine and Franklin Streets, which have been demolished or unsympathetically consumed within a larger project.

■

Among the older neighborhood garages that have been adaptively reused are the building that houses Spruce restaurant at 3640 Sacramento Street; 421 Arguello, recently converted to eight residential units; the Walgreens at Polk and Broadway; the Whole Foods at Franklin and California; and 1641 Jackson, between Van Ness and Polk, designed by the O’Brien Brothers architects. The Patagonia store on North Point below Hyde is an exceptionally well-designed example of the neighborhood garage, with a remarkable scalloped parapet.

A number of the remaining garages in the neighborhood are threatened. Foremost among them is the building that for the past two decades housed the Real Foods store at Fillmore and Filbert. After the store suddenly closed a few months ago, it was rumored that the 1915 building would be demolished and replaced by a multi-story residential building on the prominent corner lot. No plans have yet been announced, but neighbors are giving careful attention to how a large-scale development project would fit there.

The historic neighborhood garage at 1776 Green Street is currently vacant and listed for sale for nearly \$9 million. The parcel sits on a block that is primarily residential, and the real estate listing promotes it as a “development opportunity.” A residential reuse of this building might be a good fit; however, the number of units and scale of the addition would be important in maintaining the building’s overall character, and help it fit into the neighborhood. Demolition and complete redevelopment of the site would likely be very difficult, given the building’s historic nature.

A recent study commissioned by the

Planning Department focused on the auto-related buildings on and near Van Ness Avenue between Market and Pacific. The study by historian William Kostura identified historic structures that had been used as auto showrooms, public garages, repair shops, tire stores — and includes the Heald College building at 1101 Sutter, which provided an automobile engineering program teaching the ins and outs of auto design and repair.

Mark Kessler notes: “Before the Depression, roughly 300 businesses were identified as garages. In and around downtown, garages served drivers bound for offices, stores and entertainment venues. Public garages also materialized in middle- and upper-class neighborhoods with housing that did not include private garage space.”

■

Today we are rapidly losing the remaining former garages to demolition or significant alteration. Those who are historically inclined can hope that both Kessler’s well-documented, scholarly study and the recent Van Ness Auto Row study will help encourage the adaptive reuse of these structures, rather than their wholesale demolition.

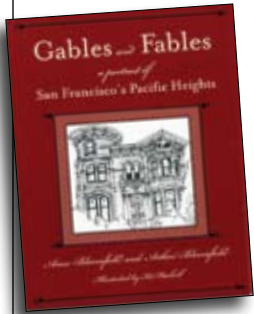
■ LOCAL HISTORY

Anne Bloomfield’s archives at Heritage

My predecessor in writing about neighborhood architecture for the *New Fillmore*, the respected architectural historian Anne Bloomfield, was an amazing researcher and a passionate advocate for maintaining the character of Pacific Heights and Presidio Heights. She died in December 1999, but her life’s work of helping preserve San Francisco’s past lives on.

Anne collected vital information on individual buildings, architects, and builders that led to the designation of many landmarks and historic districts. Her groundbreaking detective work on the building collaborative called The

Real Estate Associates, who in 1875 claimed to have built more detached houses than any other company in the U.S., revealed a sophisticated San Francisco building practice.



Her research was the foundation for *Gables & Fables*, the book her husband Arthur Bloomfield published after her death.

Recently I had the opportunity to review and organize Anne’s research files on Pacific Heights and Presidio Heights for inclusion into the collection of San Francisco Heritage at its headquarters in the Haas-Lilienthal House. The files will be invaluable to future researchers and aficionados of San Francisco’s early architecture.

— BRIDGET MALEY

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The City and County of San Francisco is pleased to announce the availability of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the sale of real property located at 1300-1320-1330 Fillmore Street in San Francisco. The property includes the commercial parcel (approximately 50,000 square feet) and adjacent, subterranean public parking garage (approximately 50,000 square feet) of the Fillmore Heritage Center. The property does not include the residential portion of the mixed-use development.
The Fillmore Heritage Center, one of the last projects from the Western Addition Redevelopment program, was developed as a multi-use facility whose goal was both to revitalize the commercial corridor and to honor the cultural heritage of the neighborhood, which prior to Urban Renewal was considered "Harlem of the West" for its sizable community of African American residents and African American-owned businesses, many of them music venues.
The City is committed to ensuring that, through its sale, the Property emerges as a vibrant and financially viable commercial establishment, such as an entertainment venue, that also provides substantial and sustained community benefits to the Fillmore corridor and the Western Addition community. The City encourages proposals that creatively incorporate one or more of the following uses: performing arts, visual/media arts, food, and recreation/leisure activities.
The RFP will be available on Friday, February 10th at <http://sfgov.org/realestate/documents>
Submissions must be received by 4:00 pm on Monday, April 3, 2017.
Inquiries or questions regarding the RFP must be directed to:
Email: fillmore-heritage-rfp@sfgov.org
Phone: (415) 554 -6475
3/4/17
CNS-2976404#
NEW FILLMORE

NEIGHBORHOOD HOME SALES

Single Family Homes	BR	BA	PK	Sq ft	Days	Date	Asking	Sale
2919 Fillmore St	6	3	2	2,650	113	1/30/2017	4,175,000	3,600,000
3145 Jackson St	8	2	0	4,950	30	1/30/2017	4,200,000	4,440,888
20 Raycliff Terrace	5	4	2	3,431	96	1/20/2017	4,995,000	4,995,000
Condos / Co-ops / TICs / Lofts								
1624 Vallejo St #2	1	1	1	654	31	2/10/2017	649,000	649,000
2655 Bush St #109	1	1	1	665	27	1/27/2017	799,550	775,000
1998 Broadway #701	2	2	2	n/a	67	1/18/2017	1,050,000	1,100,000
2655 Bush St #427	2	2	1	974	103	1/31/2017	1,269,000	1,215,000
1880 Jackson St #402	1	1	1	1,309	123	1/25/2017	1,295,000	1,220,000
1769 Broadway #8	2	1	1	1,151	5	2/13/2017	1,075,000	1,300,000
2655 Bush St #311	2	2	1	1,233	65	1/31/2017	1,407,000	1,385,000
2856 Scott St #1	1	1	1	1,479	93	1/31/2017	1,515,000	1,450,000
3924 Clay St #5	2	2	1	1,487	62	2/6/2017	1,349,000	1,495,000
2725 Sutter St	3	3	1	1,870	1	1/30/2017	1,299,000	1,500,000
2192 Pacific Ave	2	2	1	1,494	81	2/7/2017	1,625,000	1,695,000
2839 Pierce St #3	2	2	1	1,225	8	2/2/2017	1,550,000	1,779,000
1935 California St	3	3	3	1,997	39	1/31/2017	1,899,000	1,825,000
1870 Jackson St #203	3	3	1	1,800	62	2/13/2017	1,995,000	1,825,000
1865 Clay St #3	3	2	2	n/a	10	2/14/2017	1,850,000	1,900,000
2121 Webster St #502	2	2	1	n/a	1	1/24/2017	3,050,000	3,050,000
1650 Broadway #602	3	3	2	1,943	162	2/9/2017	3,995,000	3,725,000

The year starts strong

January and February are typically not very active months for real estate, but sales in the neighborhood are up by 100 percent over last year — a sign that buyer demand remains strong.

Between mid-January and mid-February, there were 20 combined single-family home sales and condominium sales in Lower Pacific Heights, Pacific Heights, Presidio Heights and Cow Hollow. During the same period last year, there were only 10 total transactions in those areas — and all were condos. Sales in the neighborhood are also moving faster than at the beginning of last year, with properties selling in an average of 40 days in January, which is more than two weeks faster than last year.

The sales spike comes with a nearly 20 percent increase in neighborhood single-family homes and condominiums for sale, compared to January 2016.

Over the past two years, the number of homes on the market has steadily increased throughout the spring before reaching a first-half-of-the-year high point in May. The offerings typically decline as the school year ends, then rise again in September and peak in October.

— Data and commentary provided by PATRICK BARBER, president of Pacific Union. Contact him at patrick.barber@pacunion.com or call 415-345-3001.

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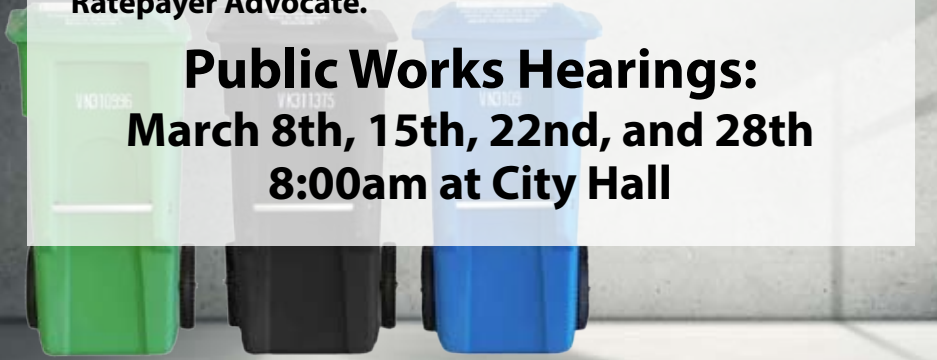
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Recology has filed an application to increase garbage rates.
Share your thoughts at hearings or by contacting the Ratepayer Advocate.



Public Works Hearings:
March 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 28th
8:00am at City Hall

Visit: www.ratepayeradvocatesf.org or call (415) 324-8477

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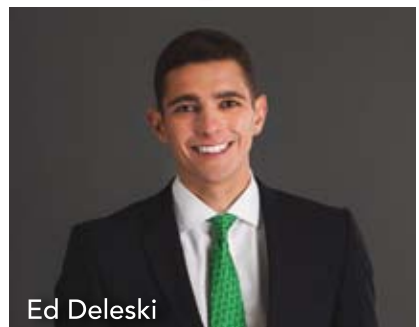
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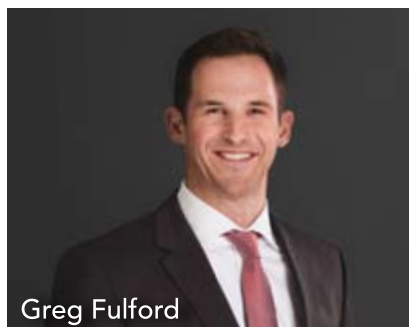
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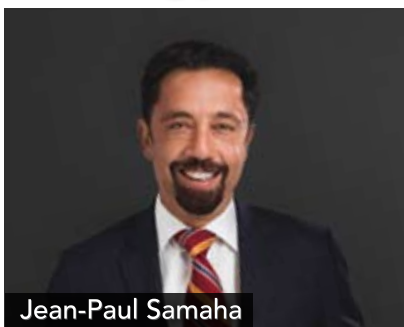
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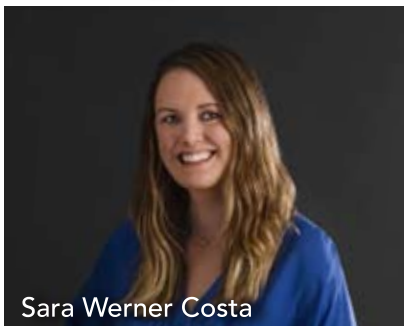
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